

THE  
**FUTURE  
OF  
AMERICA'S  
NATIONAL  
PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Longfellow National Historic Site

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



**Site:** LONG

**Year:** 2007

**Vision Statement**

Longfellow National Historic Site is a place with many stories to tell. They reach from the pre-revolutionary period when the house itself was designed & built (1759) for a slave-owning British loyalist family, through the 9-month occupancy by George Washington when he assumed command of the Continental Army and fought the Siege of Boston, and conclude with the long ownership by Celebrity poet Henry W. Longfellow and his family, lasting well into the 20th century. When living here, Longfellow not only wrote 95 % of his works, but the Longfellows and their distinguished entourage, participated as leaders in many artistic, social, political and cultural movements that shaped this country. The large house, furnished entirely with original Longfellow furniture and decorative arts, supplemented by 750,000 items in its archives, enhanced by an accurately recaptured Colonial Revival garden and pergola, Longfellow NHS is for most visitors a pleasure with unexpected dimensions and attractions. Our centennial vision is to bring new life and attention to the many different stories that were lived in this place, so that this unique layering of political, social and cultural history becomes much more accessible to a broader American public.

By 2016, the site's name will be amended to reflect its GW Headquarters function (target 2010), attracting a new visitor population with Rev War interests. By 2014 we will have the site's first introductory film to enrich our visitors' experience by explaining the site's complex history. As we develop the film (2012), we will pursue additional research on the occupants and activities in the house during the Pre-revolutionary and George Washington periods, and bring those stories into our site interpretation. A volunteer corps, caring for the restored garden, will have been long in place (2009), as will a new unigrid guide to the garden itself (2011). We will have returned our visitor season to 9 months (from the current 4) by supplementing staff with a trained docent corps (2014). Particularly our Asian visitors will be intrigued by the newly-restored "Japan Room" (2015) on the second floor, with original furniture (now in storage) displayed at last. We will cap our Centennial Year Celebration by using the history of the National Park Service and its many and diverse areas as the inspirational theme for our year-long Longfellow Festival of Poetry and Music.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Myra F. Harrison

Site: LONG

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Sadly, the condition of the exterior of Longfellow House has seriously deteriorated due to lack of funding for routine maintenance. Funding has now been obtained, and the structure will be repaired and painted by 2009, bringing it into good condition and satisfying the concerned visitors as well as the citizens of Cambridge who frequently remark on its current poor condition.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LONG

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Working with the Cambridge Tourism Office, we will develop a program to expand tourism at Longfellow NHS. Included in the strategies will be to target the garden club constituency, which is international in membership, and make a concerted marketing effort to offer interest-group tours of the Longfellow Colonial Revival garden.

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Site: LONG

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Longfellow NHS already promotes life-long learning through its festival of poetry and music, its special exhibitions, and its winter lectures. And it promotes the connection of generations at the park through such activities as sponsoring watercolor painting for parents and kids in the garden (weekly in summer) and its Family Day activities in the fall. Plans are to expand these activities leading up to the Centennial, with one proposed Centennial project that will include a special "Family Day" in each season of the year.

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Site: LONG

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Longfellow can be a standard-bearing example of a first choice in giving for those philanthropic individuals and institutions dedicated to the preservation of our cultural heritage. The site has a strong track record in this regard. It has already received two America's Treasures grants, one for its collections (\$300K) and one for the garden (\$200K). Encouraged by these contributions, the site has also received \$300K from the State of Massachusetts for collections conservation, and \$175K from the Fidelity Foundation for the same, as well as in-kind gifts from Scalamandre Fabrics (worth \$60K) of draperies replicating the originals in the historic dining room. To recapture the historic garden, the Friends of Longfellow raised an overmatch to the \$200K SAT grant, reaching a grand total of approximately \$800 K. By 2016, our vision is that the Longfellow NHS will attract an additional \$500K of philanthropic gifts directed towards cultural resources components at the site, including the restoration of the Japan Room and the provision of draperies and window seats in the historic library.

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